Children’s conceptions of mental well-being and ideas for its promotion through digital environments

# Details

## DOI

10.1016/j.ijcci.2020.100242

## Issued

2021

## Language

English

## Volume

27

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Kankaanranta M.;Mehtälä S.;Hankala M.;Merjovaara O.;Rousi R.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction

## Publisher

Elsevier BV

## Topics

Wellbeing

## Sample

79 Finnish primary school children aged 9–11 years old

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

The aim of this study is to further understanding of children’s conceptions of mental well-being and their ideas for its digital promotion. The study is based on the need to provide children an opportunity to actively participate and share their understanding of mental well-being promotion with others in light of their understanding of what online environments and their design can afford for this promotion. The study was implemented as three subsequent workshops in primary school classrooms comprising four teachers and 79 children aged 9–11 years old. In the first two workshops, children reflected on mental well-being, digital environments they utilize and their possible connections to mental well-being. In the final workshop, children designed interaction designs and concepts for digital well-being promotion. Children broadly structured mental well-being through five main categories: individual factors, social interaction, healthy living, hobbies and creativity, and the absence of mental health problems. Children considered the effects of digital environments as factors that either promote or reduce mental well-being. The use of digital environments and various individual factors were experienced as contributing most to mental well-being. Whereas, children attributed the content of digital environments mainly as diminishing mental well-being. The children’s designs for digital environments raised similar issues to their reflections on the effects of the digital environments. These could be contrasted with design dimensions proposed by earlier research. In addition, the design sessions led children to highlight new factors, reinforcing the importance of children’s participatory interaction design. Children wanted to design environments that were safe in content and function and that did not include cyber-bullying. This study presents a combination of hands-on design research techniques through co-design and conceptual probing with children. It contributes an understanding of how children conceptualize and unite understandings of mental well-being to interaction design.

# Outcome

"Children broadly structured mental well-being through five main categories: individual factors, social interaction, healthy living, hobbies and creativity, and the absence of mental health problems. Children considered the effects of digital environments as factors that either promote or reduce mental well-being. The use of digital environments and various individual factors were experienced as contributing most to mental well-being. Whereas, children attributed the content of digital environments mainly as diminishing mental well-being".